

## Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 DHA-02 SCA-01 IO-13 AID-05  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00  
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /077 W  
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R 050307Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4897

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 17239

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGSC SREF, PBOR, TH, CB  
SUBJ: CAMBODIAN REFUGEE CAMP AT ARANYAPRATHET

REF: BANGKOK 17118

SUMMARY: EA/VCL DIRECTOR BROWN AND EMBASSY OFFICER VISITED CAMBODIAN REFUGEE CAMP AT ARANYAPRATHET AUGUST 2 AS PART OF LONG-PLANNED TRIP. CAMP POPULATION HAS INCREASED FROM 4,000 TO NEARLY 7,000 SINCE JULY 15. MOOD OF REFUGEES IS ONE OF ANXIETY AS A RESULT OF RECENT BORDER CLASHES BETWEEN THAI AND CAMBODIAN FORCES. END SUMMARY.

1. AS A SECURITY PRECAUTION, THAI AUTHORITIES (RTA BATTALION COMMANDER AND DISTRICT OFFICER) IN ARANYAPRATHET HAVE ORDERED ALL CAMBODIAN REFUGEES IN THE DISTRICT TO MOVE INTO THE REFUGEE CAMP BEFORE AUGUST 5. REFUGEES, SOME OF WHOM HAVE BEEN LIVING IN TOWNS AND VILLAGES ALONG THE BORDER AREA FOR SEVERAL YEARS, ARE BEING FORCED TO MOVE INTO THE ARANYAPRATHET REFUGEE CENTER. THE MOVE HAS TRIGGERED AN INCREASE IN THE CAMP POPULATION FROM APPROXIMATELY 4,000 ON JULY 15 TO NEARLY 7,000 AS OF AUGUST 2.

2. UNHCR FIELD REPRESENTATIVE IN ARANYAPRATHET EXPRESSED  
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CONCERN THAT THE THAI POLICY REPRESENTS A STEP BACKWARDS IN EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE THE RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES IN THAILAND. UNHCR REP STATED THAT MANY OF THOSE BEING SENT TO THE CAMP HAD PREVIOUSLY HELD JOBS IN THAILAND AND WERE, FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, RESETTLED. NOW, HE SAYS, THE UNHCR WILL BE ASKED TO PROVIDE FOR THE CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF MORE THAN 3,000 REFUGEES, MANY OF WHOM

HAD FORMERLY BEEN SELF-SUFFICIENT.

3. THE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF THE RECENT INFLUX OF MORE THAN 3,000 REFUGEES INTO THE ARNAYAPRATHET CENTER IS THAT THE CAMP IS OVERCROWDED AND LIVING CONDITIONS HAVE DETERIORATED. NEW ARRIVALS ARE CONSTRUCTING FLIMSY THATCHED HOUSES ON PLOTS OF LAND THAT HAD FORMERLY BEEN USED FOR GARDENING. THE CAMP DISPENSARY, MANNED BY TWO DOCTORS AND A NURSE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE (IRC), WILL HAVE TO EXPAND ITS SERVICE TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEWLY ARRIVED CAMP RESIDENTS, MANY OF WHOM LIVED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND SUFFER FROM MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES. AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE, THE UNHCR IS RELUCTANT TO RUSH IN WITH CARE AND MAINTENANCE FUNDS FOR REFUGEES WHO, IN THEIR JUDGEMENT, HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN RESETTLED IN THAILAND. HOW THIS WILL AFFECT FOOD RATIONS IS STILL UNCERTAIN, ALTHOUGH AT PRESENT THERE SEEMS TO BE SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES OF BASIC FOOD SUPPLIES TO FEED ALL THE RESIDENTS OF THE CAMP.

4. ACCORDING TO IRC DOCTOR, THE MOOD OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE ARANYAPRATHET CENTER IS ONE OF ANXIETY. RESIDENTS OF THE CAMP ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR SECURITY FOLLOWING RECENT BORDER CLASHES IN WHICH A NUMBER OF CIVILIANS WERE KILLED AND WOUNDED. THAI OFFICIALS CHARGED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CAMP SEEM DISCOURAGED ABOUT  
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THE GROWING NUMBER OF REFUGEES UNDER THEIR CARE.

5. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE DEPARTMENT WITH INFORMATION ON RTG ATTITUDES TOWARD REFUGEES, CAMP CONDITIONS, THE GENERAL MOOD OF THE REFUGEES, AND ATTITUDES OF THAI OFFICIALS REGARDING REFUGEE MATTERS.  
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## Message Attributes

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